

2018-19

THE BIG ROBINSON SURVEY



HERSCHEL ROAD



The Big Robinson Survey

Welcome



Hello and welcome to the Big Robinson Survey Report for 2018-19!

This document is intended to summarise some of the significant data arising from the Survey that was recently circulated to Robinson students. We're delighted to be able to present the views and thoughts of almost 200 undergraduates and graduates who took the time to complete our detailed survey and I'm massively grateful to all of those who answered.

This is the first year that the RCSA has undertaken a comprehensive survey of students at Robinson College in the style of the Big Cambridge Survey produced by CUSU.

By collecting student opinions and experiences on such a scale, we're hoping that we can better identify problems and concerns among students, and better make a case for positive change at Robinson. The Survey covers a wide range of areas and has identified a number of matters for the RCSA to work on. We've summarised our findings into 4 main areas in which we focussed, college life, rent and finances, academic life at Robinson and welfare. Clearly, we couldn't find out everything we would have wanted to know in just one set of questions and I hope that future RCSA committees will consider making this Survey a regular fixture such that they can track progress made and explore other areas of interest. While the survey clearly highlights the very real effects that high rents and a lack of proper mental health support is having at Robinson, it also highlights areas of strength and gives practical steps which can be taken to improve students' lives. Over the next two and a half terms I hope that this RCSA committee will be able to work with College in all areas to put these changes into practice. If you're interested in helping change Robinson for the better there are many opportunities to get involved in the RCSA. We're likely to have a number of by-elections this term and committee elections are held every year in Michaelmas. Moreover, there are a number of student-led campaign groups at Robinson working to tackle some of the issues outlined in this survey with which you could get involved.

I'd like to thank all the committee who helped produce this survey, something which took time and effort in the incredibly busy Cambridge term. Special thanks to Chris Cheng for putting the Survey together online, Phoebe Cramer for verifying the responses and Valentine Lauwereins for analysing the data and producing this report.

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@Robinson College Students' Association



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www.rcsa.co.uk

Thomas Hinch
RCSA President 2018-2019





The Big Robinson Survey

Methodology & Demographics

684

Students in Robinson
381 Undergraduates
303 Graduates

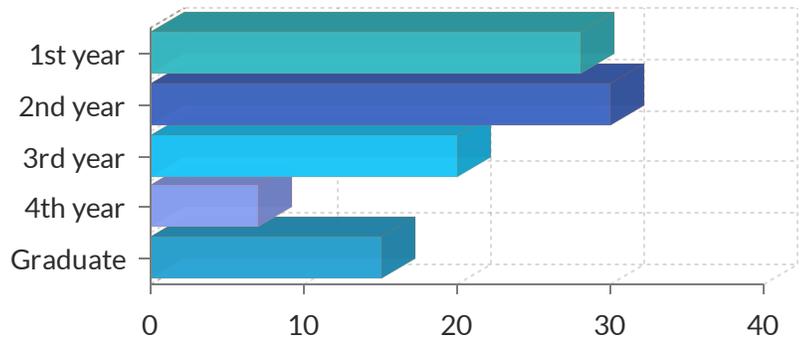


Overall, 29% (196) of Robinson Students answered.



44% of the Robinson Undergraduates answered.

Answers by year of study
As a percentage



Methodology

The Survey was circulated online through Social Media and the Robinson Undergraduates and Graduates mailing lists. A number of cash prizes were offered to students selected at random from the CRSIDs they supplied. All submissions were verified as being submitted by a Robinson Student and then anonymised by the RCSA Welfare Officer. The data was then analysed by members of the RCSA Committee. This report provides a summary of some of the RCSA's significant findings.

If you would like access to any of the data or statistics for further questions, please contact: president@rcsa.co.uk

Demographics



54.5% Men
44% Women
0.5% Non-binary
1% Prefer not to say



50% STEM



50% Humanities



80% Straight
10% LGBT+
6% Unsure
4% Prefer not to say



82% UK students



10% EU/ EEA
8% overseas



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Freshers' week

Every year, the **RCSA organises a variety of activities** to welcome incoming Freshers to Robinson. As well as attending **various workshops and talks organised by the College**, Freshers have the opportunity to go to events (such as Bops, film nights, karaoke and Pub Crawl), **sign up for clubs and societies** at the College Societies Fair, and **meet Subject Reps and RCSA Officers** in an informal setting. **This enables Freshers to meet fellow students and find out what life at Robinson is like before term begins.**

To what extent did you feel welcomed when you arrived in College on the first day?



Activities



48%

Of students did not think boat building was an enjoyable or valuable activity.

Only 24% said they found it enjoyable or valuable.



41%

Of students enjoyed the ice-breakers and found them valuable. 29% did not.



61%

Of students thought the number of activities on offer in Freshers' week was right. 27% would have liked more events. 12% thought there should have been fewer.

'Not boat building but something else which gets you into small groups, but less awkwardly!'

73% 82%

Of students said they felt welcome when they arrived.

Of students found the schedule clear and accessible.



'Some other colleges had staircase meetups, and so got closer to the people on their staircase, and having swaps and pub crawls with other colleges might help.'

International Freshers' week

- 89% of international students (EU/EEA & overseas) were made aware of International Freshers' week before arriving.
- 55% of international students attended.
- 45% of international students who attended thought International Freshers' week contributed significantly to their integration.



The Big Robinson Survey

Academic Life

Staff and students



Only **10%** of students believe **College prioritises their interests over conferencing.** 70% believe that they do not.



Only **24%** of students feel that the **Robinson senior staff** are part of the Robinson Community.



36% of students think **College staff understands their concerns and experiences.**

To what extent do you feel that the Robinson College senior staff are part of the Robinson College community?



17%



38%



21%



17%



7%

DoSs and Supervisions

83%

83% of students meet with their **DoS twice or more a term** (31% more than 3 times a term / 10% once a term / 7% less than once a term).

75%

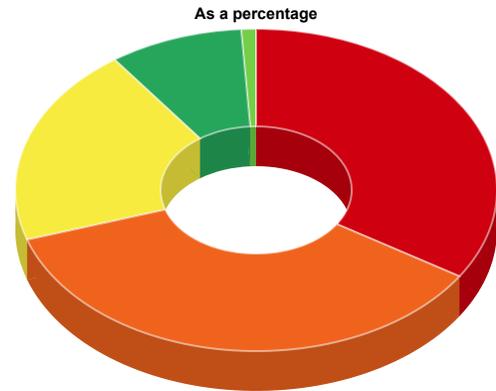
75% of students feel that their **DoS would be willing to listen** to any questions, ideas or concerns they might have (5% voted no, 20% maybe).

61%

61% of students believe they receive **enough academic support:**

- 14% believe they do not have enough support (65% of them study humanity subjects / 35% STEM subjects)
- 23% said they were unsure (56% of them study humanity subjects / 44% STEM subjects).

'College prioritises students' interests over conferencing.'



● Strongly Disagree	34
● Disagree	36
● Neither agree or disagree	20
● Agree	9
● Strongly agree	1

International Students



16% of international students (EEU/EEA and overseas) think that their academic life has been impacted by issues arising from cultural incompatibility or miscommunication.

92% of international students consider themselves fluent in English.

Comments & Suggestions

- Many students say they would like more exam and essay skills sessions, especially for freshers.
- Some students found receiving the review letter very stressful.
- Some graduates said they did not know where to find academic support in College, especially when they have external supervisors.
- Some students noted that it is hard to mix with students doing their subject when they have external DoSs.

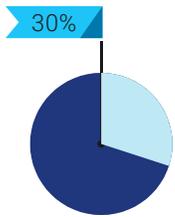
'Publicise the availability of a writing tutor, especially to first years.'

'Organise more meetings, support and socials for subjects with external DoSs.'

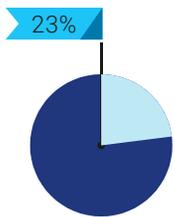


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Rent & finances



30% of students found that paying their rent had caused them **significant stress or concerns**.



At current prices and with an unlimited number of rooms from each band, **23% of students would have liked to choose a room from a cheaper band**.

Where do Robinson students receive financial assistance from?



71% of students who answered the survey receive financial assistance from **their parents or family members**.



59% of students who answered the survey receive a **student loan**.

17% receive the Cambridge bursary

16% receive scholarships

7% receive a bursary from College

To what extent does the deal the RCSA agreed with College last year satisfy your concerns about costs of living at Robinson?



15%



30%



38%



14%



3%

The deal accepted by the RCSA in 2017 included:

- An increase in the number of value rooms (from 5 to 13)
- That all standard shower rooms would be kept at the same price level as standard rooms
- That College would limit the increase in residence charge for incoming freshers (current 1st years) to 2%
- That all current undergraduates would receive £50 a term on their EPOS cards until they graduate or until 2020.

Room preferences

With the current room banding system and ballot organisation (run by the RCSA for 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students and by College for freshers), we note that overall:

- 23% of students say they would choose a cheaper room band if they could.
- 24% of students have or would have liked to have picked a value room (41 people).
- 68% of students are happy with the room band they have been allocated.

Students who currently have a ...	Value Room	Standard Room	Standard Plus Room	Best Room
	17	63	79	14
Would pick a Value	94%	32%	7%	0%
Would pick a Standard	6%	51%	10%	14%
Would pick a Standard +	0%	14%	78%	36%
Would pick a Best	0%	3%	5%	50%

Students were asked: "In a theoretical situation where there are an unlimited number of Value, Standard, Standard Plus and Best rooms, which room would you apply for at current prices?"



The Big Robinson Survey

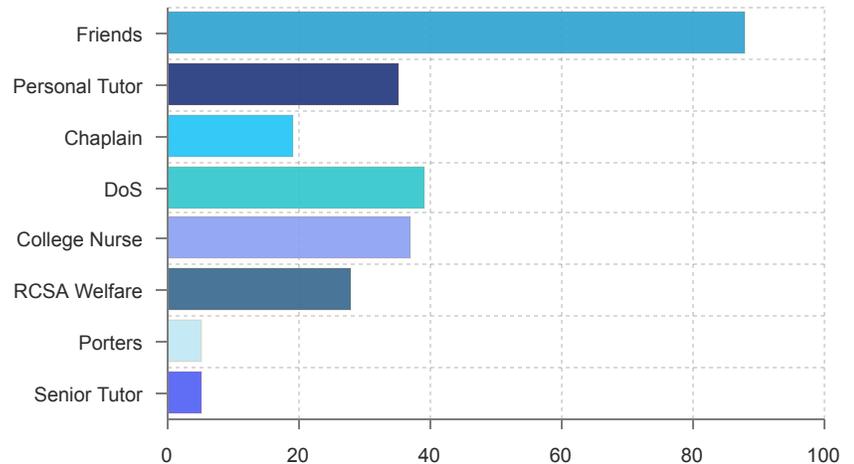
Welfare



- 60% of students believe that attending Cambridge University has had a negative effect on their mental health (41% slightly negative / 19% very negative).
- 20% of students believe that it has had a positive effect (15% slightly positive / 5% very positive).
- The proportions are broadly similar for STEM and humanities students (although slightly more STEM students than humanities students think it has had a positive effect).

If you had a personal issue or needed advice, who would you feel comfortable contacting/going to?

As a percentage



The tutorial system

65%

65% of students believe that their tutor is someone who is separate from their DoS, supervisors and academic life (16% said answered no / 19% were unsure).

46%

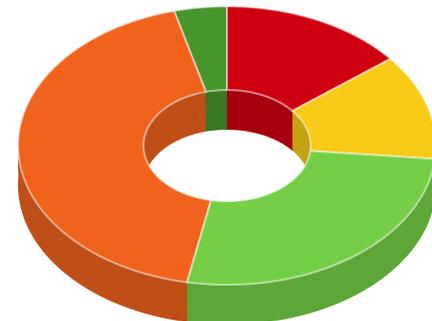
46% of students don't feel comfortable going to their tutor for personal problems (36% male / 56% female). Only 26% said that they would feel comfortable.

34%

34% of students think their tutor would be able to help them with their issues (30% don't / 36% are unsure).

How often do you meet with your tutor?

As a percentage



- Never 14
- Less than once a term 12
- Once a term 26
- Twice a term 42
- 3 times or more 4

Counselling



48% of students believe they would benefit from having a counselling service at Robinson (37% all year around / 11% in exam term specifically).

32% of students answered maybe. 20% no.

43% of BAME Students think it's important to have support delivered from someone from the same racial background. 44% of women, from the same gender.

University Counselling Service

17% of respondents have tried to get an appointment from the University Counselling Service.



42% of them either had to wait more than a month to be given an appointment or did not receive one (6% didn't get one / 36% waited over a month / 36% got one within a month / 21% waited less than 2 weeks).